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S E C R E T ANKARA 003775

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/ITA AND DS/IP/EUR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/27/2021

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PKK](#)

SUBJECT: PKK AFFILIATE CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOMBING  
TURKISH TOURIST AREA

REF: ANKARA 3727

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S) SUMMARY: The Kurdish Freedom Falcons (TAK), a well-known PKK affiliate, has claimed responsibility for the June 26 bombing in Manavgat, a tourist destination near the coastal resort of Antalya. This bombing fulfills previous threats by TAK to target foreign tourists and brings the death toll of foreigners killed by the PKK and its affiliates over the past year to five. Public statements and sensitive reporting indicate continued PKK planning for large-scale attacks on both tourist sites and urban areas. END SUMMARY.

2.(U) The Turkish daily newspaper Vatan reported on June 27 that security cameras at the Manavgat waterfall, a well-known tourist destination on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, captured on tape three individuals (one woman and two men) placing a bag containing a bomb in a municipal trash container at a picnic area on June 25. The bomb detonated twenty minutes later.

3. (C) The Firat News Agency, considered sympathetic to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), on June 27 posted a report on its website saying that an anonymous caller claimed responsibility for the explosion on behalf of the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK). According to the website, the person said "You cannot have a vacation in a war zone" and noted that the TAK had issued a warning earlier in the year to tourists to stay away from Turkey. The death of three foreigners (Hungarian, Russian, Norwegian) in this explosion brings the total number of foreigners killed during the past year in terrorist-related incidents to five. Many others have sustained injuries, including the tens of Hungarians among the 28 wounded in this attack.

4. (U) Officially, both the Turkish National Police (TNP) and the Jandarma say there isn't enough evidence to conclude the explosion was the result of a bomb -- and not a gas canister, as originally suggested. One source commented that most of the evidence was thrown into the water as a result of the explosion, leaving little residue to conclusively determine its origin. Unofficially, however, a TNP contact indicated that the explosion was likely caused by an improvised explosive device (IED) set by a terrorist group. Our Jandarma contacts have acknowledged only that the explosion "looks suspicious."

5. (U) In a separate incident on June 26, suspected PKK terrorists set up a roadblock in the Dortyol district of Hatay province further east along the Mediterranean and detained ten cars in order to rob them. According to newspaper reports, the terrorists opened fire on a mini bus as it made its escape. The bus did get away but the driver was lightly wounded.

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